



Flood Control District

of Maricopa County

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Flood Control District Provides Flooding Information to Media and Emergency Agencies During Recent Rainstorm

PHOENIX (Jan. 29, 2008) – Sunday’s day-long rainstorm, soaking the Phoenix metropolitan area and dropping up to four inches of precipitation, put the staff of the Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) into full swing to alert local media and emergency agencies to the potential for flash flooding conditions.

The District’s ALERT Center, staffed by a meteorologist and hydrologist, monitored 300 weather, rainfall and streamflow gages positioned in key locations and population centers throughout the county. Real-time data from the gages showed steadily increasing rainfall amounts and floodwater flows in washes and streams, particularly in the higher elevations of the northeast. The District maintained direct contact with the National Weather Service, providing the weather agency with complete rainfall and streamflow information. Initially, the National Weather Service issued a Flash Flood Watch for much of north-central Arizona at 3:43 a.m. on Saturday. After 12 p.m. on Sunday, streams and washes in north-central Maricopa County began to flow at several thousand cubic feet per second according to District gages. At 2:40 p.m. on Sunday, the National Weather Service issued a Flash Flood Warning for Carefree, Camp Creek and Cave Creek.

“The Flood Control District has a 48-year history of ensuring county residents have a minimal risk of property damage and loss of life due to flooding,” said Andy Kunasek, chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. “Swift action by the ALERT Center during Sunday’s rains was crucial in providing the information to keep residents informed of the potential flash flood hazards in their area.”

The District’s public information office maintained contact with local print and television media throughout the day, stressing flood hazard safety and the District’s monitoring of the situation.

The various dams, channels and other regional flood control structures built into the landscape of the county performed as designed. Flooding that did occur was limited to incidental street puddles and impassable roadways with dip crossings through flooded washes.

Educating residents about the dangers of flooded roadways and washes has been a critical, long-term safety campaign by the District. During Sunday’s rains, one motorist was rescued from a vehicle stranded in a flooded road crossing through Indian Bend Wash in Scottsdale. “It is imperative for county residents to heed flash flood warnings and to obey danger signs posted at flooded roadways,” said Tim Phillips, the District’s chief engineer and general manager. “The power of a flash flood is not something to ignore.”

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County is tasked to provide regional flood hazard identification, regulation, remediation, and education to Maricopa County residents so that they can reduce their risk of injury, death, and property damage from flooding, while still enjoying the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

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